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○ Spring | ○ 2013

DPBHS Kids Line

A Newsletter from the Delaware Children's Department
Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services

RESILIENT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
LIVING IN SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES

Welcome Cabinet Secretary Ranji

On March 25, 2013, Jennifer Ranji was sworn in as the 7th Cabinet Secretary for the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families (DSCYF) Secretary Ranji was joined by members of her family, Delaware Governor Jack Markell, DSCYF staff, representatives from the Judiciary, General Assembly, Department of Justice, child advocacy organizations and special guests.

"Jennifer's experience as a fierce advocate for children in her private legal practice, and the depth and breadth of her experience with policy and education issues have prepared her well to lead our Children's Department," said Governor Jack Markell. "She is committed to working with the staff to find new, innovative ways to better serve our children and families, making a lasting difference for Delaware's children and their families."

Secretary Ranji served as Education Policy Advisor in the Office of Governor Markell from September 2009 to July 2012 and was the lead staff person on Race to the Top and Early Childhood Race to the Top initiatives. Prior to that, she served as Deputy Legal Counsel in the Office of Governor Thomas Carper, and as Director of Legal Affairs for Family Court of the State of Delaware. She has also practiced law privately and provided pro bono representation to domestic violence victims through Delaware Volunteer Legal Services and to child abuse victims through the Office of the Child Advocate.



DPBHS Kids Line

Jack Markell
Governor

A Newsletter from the
Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services (DPBHS)
Delaware Children's Department

View Report Card
Cabinet Secretary

A Message from the Director

I want to share information on the Division's response to teen suicides in our State in 2012. Based on data from the 2011 Delaware Middle School Youth Risk Behavior Survey, we have learned that each year school year, a higher number of students are at risk with suicide. In fact, a shocking high percentage of Delaware middle school students, 22%, have seriously thought about killing themselves, and 12% have gone so far as to make a plan to kill themselves. In the past year, 18% of Delaware middle school kids have done something to physically hurt themselves. ~~deliberately~~ As kids move from middle school to high school, too many turn to drugs, violence, and other risky behaviors. This data points to the fact that we must be prepared to do more in the way of prevention and to ensure that we continue to provide the most effective responses to any future crisis. Recently, DPBHS reached out to national experts, including Dr. Larry Berger, President of the American Association on Suicideology, and Dr. Steven Berkowitz, from the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Berger was asked to review our prevention response to the teen suicides at Polk High School. In his consultative statement, Dr. Berger reported the following:



DPBHS

Spring 2012

Special points of interest:
○ Update on the Division's response to recent Teen Suicides
○ Blue Backs to Green For Children's Mental Health
○ Get the Stamp on Mental Health with Emily Warner

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"I am honored and excited for the opportunity to lead the Department that works to address some of the most fundamental needs of our kids -- the need to be safe, to be supported, to be healthy, and to make good choices for themselves and their communities."

Kids Line Makeover

The newsletter produced by the Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services has undergone a makeover. This is the first edition of the Kids Line publication with the updated format. This edition will primarily focus on our Prevention activities.



Prevention Services

DPBHS Prevention Services focus on promoting safe and healthy children, nurturing families and building strong communities. More specifically, prevention services are designed to address:

- Violence
- Suicide
- Substance abuse
- Child abuse
- Behavioral Health issues

Our prevention programs are designed to increase awareness and reach children and families

before problems occur or before problems are deeply entrenched. Services include training, public education and programming through partnerships.

DPBHS utilizes community coalitions to strengthen the delivery of prevention services. Historically, coalitions are formed to address and combat problematic social issues such as violence, disease, crime, underage drinking and substance abuse. Coalitions consist of diverse groups of people pursuing a common goal. It has been demonstrated that when all sectors of a community come together social change happens. Prevention-focused coalitions that are supported through DPBHS are the Delaware Prevention Coalition, Suicide Prevention Coalition and the Delaware Fatherhood and Family Coalition.

DPBHS incorporates school-based programs (managed under our Early Intervention Unit) as well as extended hours summer programs into the prevention continuum of services.

DPBHS also coordinates statewide media campaigns that address the prevention of risky behaviors including underage drinking and anti-

bullying.

May was Mental Health Awareness Month. During the month of May, Division staff coordinated several events to highlight the importance of children's mental health and access to services.

See the Prevention-related articles in this newsletter on:

- DPBHS School-Based Services
- Delaware Prevention Coalition
- Community Center Summer Program
- Mental Health Awareness Month

Did you know?

In the most recent Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey, over 20% of middle school students surveyed reported having seriously considered suicide at some point in their life while over 33% reported using alcohol and 14% reported having used drugs.

PBH's Year-Round School-Based Services

For many Delaware children, the ability to succeed in school is impacted by behavioral health issues. Nearly twenty (20) percent of our children, ages 2-17, have one or more emotional, behavioral or developmental condition.

Family Crisis Therapists (FCTs) are assigned to fifty-three elementary schools throughout the state and provide a range of interventions designed to remove barriers to academic and social success.



These interventions continue during the summer months and include individual and group counseling, parent education and preparation for the transition into a new school year.

In addition, the FCTs have the opportunity to provide summer mini programs that provide social, behavioral and education programming to selected students. FCTs develop themed mini programs that

reinforce school readiness and active parent participation to encourage positive outcomes.

During the summer of 2012, the FCTs conducted 20 summer mini programs to students and families. The programing supported prevention and early intervention practices through promoting wellness, mental health, social and emotional growth that help strengthen families.

FCTs also assist the schools with preparing for the new school year and are part of the school's planning team to develop goals for the new year.

With support from the General Assembly, we hope to significantly increase our school-based services within the Middle Schools.

Governor Markell has requested additional funding for the successful Behavioral Health Consultant program in the Middle Schools. This will allow us to increase our current consultant contractual force ten-fold. The consultants will assess for risks associated with suicide and screen for mental health and substance use problems. Students will be able to receive counseling in schools and receive referrals to other school-based services or to community mental health or substance abuse providers for longer term treatment.

Delaware Prevention Coalition

The Delaware Prevention Coalition (DPC) is a statewide collaborative group designed to build and strengthen the capacity of community partners to create safe, healthy drug-free communities. The DPC operates through a partnership with the Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services.

The DPC is responsible for the implementation of a comprehensive statewide prevention effort to promote wellness and reduce alcohol, tobacco, and other drug abuse in the State of Delaware.

Studies have shown that alcohol use by youth and young adults increases the risk of both fatal and nonfatal injuries. Research has also shown that youth who use alcohol before age 15 are five times more likely to become alcohol dependent than adults who begin drinking at age 21.

Other consequences of youth alcohol use include increased risky sexual behaviors, poor school performance, and increased risk of suicide and homicide.

Prevention programs in the past have traditionally focused on approaches designed to affect the individual, peers or families. Today, structured coalitions work to reduce substance abuse in the larger community by implementing comprehensive, multi-strategy approaches.

The Delaware Prevention Coalition has engaged a number of partners from across the State of Delaware that also have a stake in ensuring that our youth and families have access to and are aware of the resources and opportunities that presently exist in their communities, as well as ensuring that our youth are given the necessary tools to be productive citizens. These partners include: West End Neighborhood House, First State Community Action Agency, Greater Dover Boys and Girls Club, Edgemoor Community Center, Brandywine Community Counseling Services, Division of

Prevention and Behavioral Health Services, Red Clay Consolidated

School District, Sussex County Chamber of Commerce, Calvary Baptist Church, Delaware Alcohol Tobacco Enforcement, Delaware National Guard, Youth, Parents and other members of the community.

Some of the events that the DPC has organized or partnered on over the last year include:

- Statewide (all three counties and City of Wilmington) Town

Hall Meetings organized and led by teens

- National Youth Leadership Training
- Ticket to Prevention Health Fair
- Teen Summit
- Lunch & Learns events at various Delaware schools

For more information on the Delaware Prevention Coalition, go to:

<http://www.delawarepreventioncoalition.org/>



Community Centers

For the past two years, DPBHS has addressed violence in Wilmington, by making it possible for community centers to extend their hours during the summer. The Extended Hours Program was designed to allow community centers in Wilmington to remain open, provide a safe haven and age appropriate services for youth who might otherwise be out on the street.

This past summer and early fall, more than 6,500 youth participated in the extended hours service, doubling the number of youth served the previous year. Youth participated in suicide awareness, anti-bullying, substance abuse prevention, character building, technology classes, and organized sports.

While this effort was successful in supporting children, youth and families, the services were limited to community centers in the City of Wilmington.

Governor Markell has requested additional funding to broaden our prevention efforts to serve children and youth across the state. With the General Assembly's approval, DPBHS will expand preventive mental health services after school and during the summer statewide.

This initiative is targeted to address both youth suicide and violence and is an outgrowth of the initial findings of an investigation conducted by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) of teen suicides in Kent and Sussex Counties in 2012.

The CDC conveyed that there is a great need for after school activities for youth in Kent and Sussex Counties, and that the lack of such activities may be a significant contributor to teen suicides in these areas of the state.

Proposed programming would include: suicide awareness, anti-bullying and substance abuse prevention, in addition to the arts, nature programs and recreation. The program will require training for adults who serve youth, enabling them to better connect children and families with additional services.

Modeled after the successful extended hours program operated by community centers in the City of Wilmington, local resources throughout the state would be supported to extend accessibility, hours of operation and implement prevention programs for additional days during the week, to include either a Friday or a Saturday evening at selected faith-based or community organizations.

Unsupervised Teens and Crime:

- 35% of all 12 year olds are unsupervised after school (US DOJ-OJJDP)
- Juvenile violent crime peaks after school (US DOJ-OJJDP)

Mental Health Awareness Month

In recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month, DPBHS planned and successfully carried out a series of events during the month of May.

The **DPBHS Prevention and Behavioral Health Forum**, held in Dover on May 1st and 2nd, led off the series of events. The conference was supported by Cabinet Secretary, Jennifer Ranji, who provided opening day remarks that included strong support for the prevention, early intervention and treatment services delivered by DPBHS.



Governor Markell (pictured below) also participated in the opening day activities. Governor Markell spoke about the ongoing effort to provide adequate services and supports to vulnerable Delaware children and families and outlined his work to increase children's mental health resources throughout the state.



The keynote speakers for the conference were Dr. Michael Lindsey, Associate Professor at the School of Social Work, University of Maryland; Dr. William Geary, Technical Assistance Manager, Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America and Dr. Jason Lang, Associate Director, Connecticut Center for Effective Practice-Child Health and Development Institute.

In addition to our excellent keynote speakers, the conference offered an array of workshops focused on the continuum of DPBHS services--prevention, early intervention and treatment—as well as early childhood services, family engagement, youth engagement and healthy living.

Approximately 400 professionals attended

the conference from a broad spectrum including other state agencies, members of our prevention and treatment provider network, schools, community based organizations, pre-schools, youth organizations and faith based organizations.

During the week of May 5th through May 11th, DPBHS celebrated **Children's Mental Health Awareness Week** to highlight the importance of children's mental health and access to services.

The week started with visits to early child care providers to incorporate a curriculum on emotions and feelings. On Tuesday, May 7th, Senator Ernie Lopez (pictured below) joined staff from DPBHS at the Coolsprings Head Start Program in Milton for the program called Glad, Sad, Silly Mad...I Have Feelings Too. On Wednesday



May 8th, DPBHS Director Susan Cycyk and staff visited the Telemon Head Start in Dover to conduct the program and on Thursday May 9th, Children's Department Secretary Jennifer Ranji (pictured below) joined the children at Beverly's Helping Hand in Wilmington.

Children's Mental Health Awareness Week activities also included the annual **"Get the Scoop on Mental Health"** campaign with



ten Rita's Water Ice locations throughout the state. Nearly 700 information packets on DPBHS services, the Stars program promoting quality early learning programs, and useful promotion items along with coupons for water ice treats were distributed between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. that day.



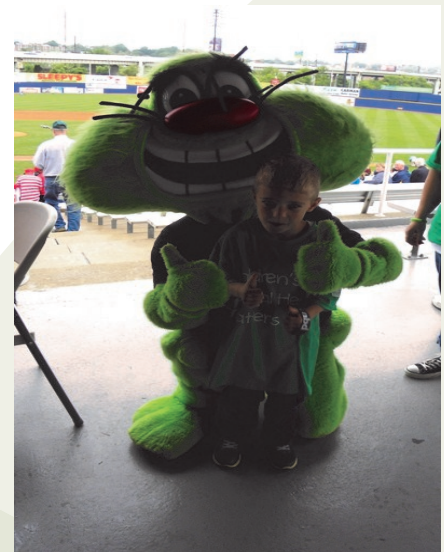
PBH Prevention Director Daphne Warner (left) and Cathy Imburgia, Social Marketing Director for PBH's Delaware's B.E.S.T. Grant (right) are joined by Jurdy®, the anti-bullying mascot at the Rita's Water Ice on Philadelphia Pike in Claymont.

On Sunday, May 19th, the Division capped the Mental Health Awareness Month activities with the **Wilmington Blue Rocks Go Green for Children's Mental Health** game at Frawley Stadium.

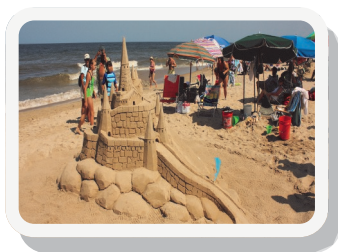
DPBHS Division Director, Susan Cycyk



(center) on the field during the Wilmington Blue Rocks pre-game activities.



Jurdy®, the anti-bully mascot, also attended the game. Jurdy is pictured with Joshua Gindhart (son of PBH Executive Secretary Jana Gindhart)



Keeping Young Teens Safe - Suggestions for Families



Developmental Milestones

Adolescence is a time of physical, mental, emotional, and social change. This also will be a time when your teen might face peer pressure to use alcohol, tobacco products, and drugs, and to have sex. Other challenges can be eating disorders, depression, and family problems. At this age, teens make more of their own choices about friends, sports, studying, and school. They become more independent, with their own personality and interests, although parents are still very important.

Positive Parenting Tips:

- Be honest and direct with your teen when talking about sensitive subjects such as drugs, drinking, smoking, and sex.
- Meet and get to know your teen's friends.
- Show an interest in your teen's

school life.

- Help your teen make healthy choices while encouraging him to make his own decisions.
- Respect your teen's opinions and take into account her thoughts and feelings. It is important that she knows you are listening to her.
- When there is a conflict, be clear about goals and expectations (like getting good grades, keeping things clean, and showing respect), but allow your teen input on how to reach those goals (like when and how to study or clean).

Child Safety First

You play an important role in keeping your child safe—no matter how old he or she is. Here are a few tips to help protect your child:

- Talk with your teen about the dangers of drugs, drinking, smoking, and risky sexual ac-

tivity. Ask him what he knows and thinks about these issues,

and share your thoughts and feelings with him. Listen to what she says and answer her questions honestly and directly.

- Talk with your teen about the importance of having friends who are interested in positive activities. Encourage her to avoid peers who pressure her to make unhealthy choices.
- Know where your teen is and whether an adult is present. Make plans with him for when he will call you, where you can find him, and what time you expect him home.
- Set clear rules for your teen when she is home alone. Talk about such issues as having friends at the house, how to handle situations that can be dangerous (emergencies, fire, drugs, sex, etc.), and completing homework or household tasks.

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NCTSN

The National Child
Traumatic Stress Network

carf
Commission on Accreditation
of Rehabilitation Facilities

We're on the Web!
kids.delaware.gov